COMMON
Ground
PRESERVING OUR NATION'S HERITAGE SUMMER 2005

REBIRTHING BETHLEHEM A STEEL TOWN SEEKS NEW LIFE

FIRST WORD

Patriot Acts

BY JAMES OLIVER HORTON

OUR NATIONAL UNION HAS ALWAYS BEEN fragile, held together by a belief in the ideals outlined in the Declaration of Independence: individual freedom and the opportunity for a bright future. In an era when patriotism and national security are topics of considerable debate, a true understanding of our nation's past is critical. **IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE PROMISE OF** America, rather than its historical reality, that has inspired people, and it is the precarious state of that promise that underlies much of the current political dialogue. Facing trying times and difficult choices, it is essential that we look to the experience of those for whom the promise has proved elusive: the poor, the oppressed, the newly arrived, women, and people of color. This is one of the most important roles that we, as historians, can play in a democratic society—to remind Americans of their past and the national promise as yet unfulfilled.

Many Americans who sacrificed during wars and hard times—even as they and their families faced acts of injustice at the hands of the country they served—did so with faith in the national promise. **IF AMERICA'S PROMISE IS EVER TO BE** fulfilled, the nation must understand the great debt owed to those who, despite oppression, were willing to place their hope in the ideas behind the Declaration of Independence. They are the voiceless people of the American past, their stories untold. As historians, we owe it to them to educate the people, to redirect the society towards greater freedom and increased opportunity. **THE AMERICAN HISTORY TAUGHT IN INSTITUTIONS** of higher learning has changed dramatically since the 1960s. But what about elsewhere—in high schools, museums, and national parks, in the exhibits of thousands of historical societies? How is history retold in film and on TV? **TO MOST PEOPLE,** even decades-old interpretation can seem shocking and new. But there has been a great deal of scholarship in the last few decades on contemporary issues such as race in America, which remains among the nation's most contentious. Teaching history that asks difficult questions can be hazardous to your professional health, but it is essential for citizens of a democratic society. **SLAVERY AND THE CIVIL WAR REMAIN** very delicate subjects. When the superintendent at Gettysburg National Military Park suggested in a public lecture that slavery might have been one important cause of the Civil War, the Southern Heritage Coalition deluged the Secretary of the Interior with over a thousand postcards calling for the superintendent's immediate removal. Elsewhere, there have been assertions that modern historians have it all wrong, that far from being evil and inhumane, slavery curbed racial animosity and actually fostered affection between the master and the enslaved. **WHAT IS AN ILL-INFORMED PUBLIC** to believe? Three generations of scholarship raise critical questions about slavery, but the public is largely unaware of it. Historians should support their colleagues in government, museums, schools, and historic sites to bring the best recent scholarship to the American people. **MANY VENUES ARE OPEN** to us for this effort. The National Endowment for the Humanities, the U.S. Department of Education's Teaching

> **"If America's promise is ever to be fulfilled, the nation must understand the great debt owed to those who, despite oppression, were willing to place their hope in the ideas behind the Declaration of Independence."**

American History Project, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, and others sponsor seminars for history teachers on a broad range of topics. The Organization of American Historians, through its distinguished lecture series, brings the latest scholarship to local libraries and historical societies. OAH members have worked to assist with interpretation in our national parks and with museums like the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. **PRESENTING HISTORY IN A FORM THAT PEOPLE** will accept is a daunting challenge. Yet, it is one that we must undertake as a matter of public service, one that few others can render. Some might call it a matter of patriotism—a commitment to the Declaration's highest ideals and a determination that the American promise will one day become an American reality.

James Oliver Horton, outgoing president of the Organization of American Historians, is Benjamin Banneker Professor of American Studies and History at George Washington University. This article was excerpted from his address at this year's OAH annual meeting.

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Cover: Night claims the defunct blast furnaces of Pennsylvania's Bethlehem Steel.

DAVID ANDREWS/NPS

NEWS CLOSEUP

A PLACE BY THE SEA

A Question of Access at Cape Cod National Seashore

For generations, writers, painters, nature lovers, and those in search of seclusion have gathered at a group of tiny cabins at the tip of Cape Cod. Spare and rustic, and removed from the outside world, they offer a dramatic view of the Atlantic on a stretch of Cape Cod National Seashore.

Many of the dune shacks, as they are known, are a product of nearby Provincetown's evolution as an artists' colony. At the turn of the 20th century, people began using deserted structures such as boathouses, chicken coops, and a former lifesaving station as studios or vacation retreats. In time, a small number of modest structures sprang up, still in use today. Seasonal pilgrimages to the shacks have become a tradition, posing a challenge to the National Park Service, which acquired the land in 1961.

Under a decades-old agreement, ownership of the structures is gradually being transferred to the seashore. But those who visit the shacks are concerned about continued access, so the place may warrant special treatment because of its past and its importance to people's experience of the seashore.

An ethnographic study, commissioned by the National Park Service, is looking at whether the people who use the shacks could be considered a culture. Last summer, anthropologist Robert J. Wolfe sought people to talk about their memories. Such ways of life, like habitat for nesting shorebirds, are an aspect of the seashore that the National Park Service is obliged to preserve. "This is a whole new arena for us," says chief of cultural resources Sue Moynihan. "We're used to dealing with the tangible," like the remains of Marconi Station, which sent the first transatlantic wireless message.

MANY OF THE DUNE SHACKS, AS THEY ARE KNOWN, ARE A PRODUCT OF NEARBY PROVINCETOWN'S EVOLUTION AS AN ARTISTS' COLONY. AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY, PEOPLE BEGAN USING DESERTED STRUCTURES SUCH AS BOATHOUSES, CHICKEN COOPS, AND A FORMER LIFESAVING STATION AS STUDIOS OR VACATION RETREATS. IN TIME, A SMALL NUMBER OF MODEST STRUCTURES SPRANG UP, STILL IN USE TODAY.

When the seashore was established, the shacks were inside the boundary drawn by Congress. Since the dune dwellers did not own the land, they entered into agreements in which they got money and use of the shacks for a specified term. The National Park Service intended to demolish the structures as terms expired.

This prompted local citizens to form the nonprofit Peaked Hill Trust—after the ridge where the shacks reside—with preservation as its aim. The group got the area designated a state historic district, eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The determination was based primarily on an association with the development of American art, literature, and theater (Eugene O'Neill—among others—lived here).

By the end of this year, the National Park Service will be responsible for managing 10 of the 17 shacks. "The ethnographic report is a key component in deciding what to do," says Moynihan.

The study seeks to clarify who the dune dwellers are as well as ascertain their values and why they come here.

Maintenance is key too. The shacks, built with makeshift materials, don't fit conventional preservation strategies. Plus the fragile environment is subject to violent change.

The study, along with an environmental assessment, will guide decisions on preservation and use.

For more information, contact Chuck Smythe, National Park Service, 15 State Street, Boston, MA 02109, (617) 223-5014, email chuck_smythe@nps.gov.

RIGHT AND ABOVE LEFT: STEVE HEASLIP, CAPE COD TIMES

Below left: Families have summered in the shacks for generations. Local groups conduct artist-in-residence programs in the structures under agreements with the National Park Service; others have leases. **Below:** One of the diminutive dwellings.

Landmark Decision

Federal Courthouse Girds for Potential Disaster

Above: Interior details of Portland's Pioneer Courthouse. Opposite: The landmark's signature cupola.

THE PIONEER COURTHOUSE is probably Portland's most revered landmark. The oldest federal building in the Pacific Northwest, it was completed in 1875, and heavily used since, housing a post office and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The rehabilitation of the National Register property, now underway, has attracted attention for both its technical prowess and local controversy.

Though Portland doesn't snap to mind when one mentions earthquakes, seismologists say one will hit eventually. A 1993 tremor, about 25 miles away, cracked plaster and wood inside the courthouse. A strong quake could collapse it.

So the place is getting a "seismic upgrade," plus a thorough rehabilitation that includes historically accurate landscaping. The entire building will rest on 75 large ball bearings, each sitting in a shallow stainless-steel dish. A four-foot-wide "moat" around the foundation's perimeter will allow the building to move freely during a quake, after which it will settle back into its original position.

The technique is expensive. Of the 400 historic buildings under the care of the Government Services Administration, only one—San Francisco's U.S. Court of Appeals—has been stabilized this way.

GSA has long wanted to stabilize the Pioneer Courthouse with the technique, but "it was dropped year after year from appropriations," says Barbara Campagna, a historic preservation officer with the agency. Finally, Congress approved a special appropriation. "We couldn't have done it otherwise," she says. "It deserves that level of protection."

THE ENTIRE BUILDING WILL REST ON 75 LARGE BALL BEARINGS, EACH SITTING IN A SHALLOW STAINLESS-STEEL DISH. A FOUR-FOOT-WIDE "MOAT" AROUND THE FOUNDATION'S PERIMETER WILL ALLOW THE BUILDING TO MOVE FREELY DURING A QUAKE.

Other developments have lent an added twist. The post office was moved out to make more room for the Ninth Circuit Court, which, according to GSA—the federal government's property manager—needed the space. To local residents, however, the post office was both convenient and a beloved landmark. Nor was there much enthusiasm for a new underground parking garage for judges—which meant punching a hole in the foundation wall.

But the parking wasn't just judicial whim. According to federal guidelines governing courthouse design, judges must have secure parking underground, and there was none. This is of particular concern in the post-September 11 climate.

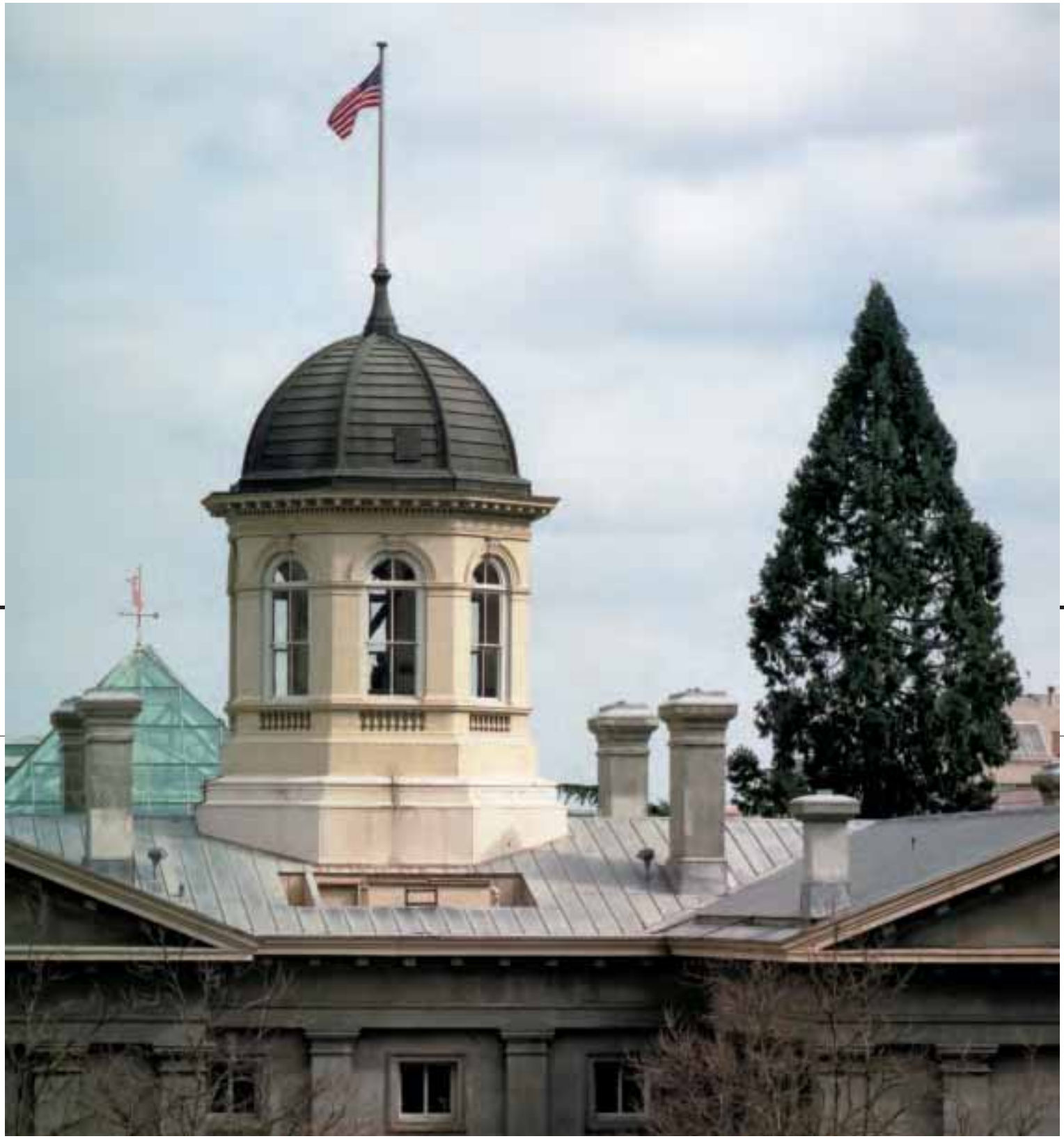
The city resisted the parking because cars would cross light rail tracks, a zoning violation. GSA wrangled with Portland until legal proceedings looked inevitable, and the city issued a permit.

The National Park Service, the state preservation office, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation all consulted. The work, to wrap this fall, will cost about $22 million.

In use since the Grant administration, the courthouse was the creation of Alfred B. Mullett, a prolific architect for the U.S. Government. The courthouse is classic Italian Renaissance, built with Tenino sandstone quarried in Washington State, its interior decorated with elaborate plaster moldings and extensive millwork in oak and fir.

For more information, contact Barbara Campagna, GSA, 400 15th Street SW, Auburn, WA 98001, (253) 931-7192, email barbara.campagna@gsa.gov. For more on GSA's historic building program, go to www.gsa.gov, click on "buildings," then "public buildings" and "historic preservation."

ALL PHOTOS CAROL HIGHSMITH



MAIN STREET COMEBACK

EXPLORING VIRGINIA'S SMALL TOWNS WITH THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Much has been written about the death of downtown and usually with good reason, what with the march of strip malls and big box stores. That's why it's both heartening and surprising to drive through rural Virginia and see a host of small towns that have preserved their historic commercial districts, and are still alive and thriving—the 17 spotlighted in "Virginia Main Street Communities," an online travel itinerary from the National Register of Historic Places.

RADFORD, BERRYVILLE, WINCHESTER, FRANKLIN—THEY COULD BE anywhere. They are like thousands of American towns that grew up along a river or at a crossroads, quiet communities with modest commerce, their heydays now past. The difference is that these towns, unlike many of their counterparts, look like a trick of time travel. Rockwellian set pieces, their buildings gleam with polished glass and fresh paint. Business activity signals health, nurtured by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's Main Street Program.

Each town on the itinerary has photographs, a brief history, and links to National Register sites. The links yield images and information on the town's historical significance. The itinerary also provides practical information such as directions and special events, everything you need for a trip.

Most of the towns have their origins in the late 18th or early 19th centuries, springing up around rivers, mills, railroads, and turnpikes. Virginia's flourishing agricultural economy, the taming of rivers with locks, sluices, and dams, and, eventually, the railroad, all contributed to development.

And then there was perhaps the ultimate expression of permanence and purpose: the courthouse. A courthouse put a town on the map, declaring that this was where things got done. There are several on the itinerary, beautifully designed, many which played major roles in historical events.

Above, right: Staunton's architectural treasures, packing the downtown and the hilly residential districts, complement a lively arts and shopping scene.

The Civil War affected nearly all of the towns, almost destroying Manassas. As the 19th century progressed, mining and industry left their mark. The car and the highway introduced the era of tourism, along with sprawl, congestion, and the death knell of main street.

The Virginia Main Street Program got started in 1985 in response to the steady exodus of businesses. Federal and state tax incentives have been key to preservation, advantages contingent on carefully

ALL PHOTOS DAVID ANDREWS/NPS


Garrett's
MENSWEAR
DEPOT

THEY ARE LIKE THOUSANDS OF AMERICAN TOWNS THAT GREW UP ALONG A RIVER OR AT A CROSSROADS, QUIET COMMUNITIES WITH MODEST COMMERCE, THEIR HEYDAYS NOW PAST. THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT THESE TOWNS, UNLIKE MANY OF THEIR COUNTERPARTS, LOOK LIKE A TRICK OF TIME TRAVEL. ROCKWELLIAN SET PIECES, THEIR BUILDINGS GLEAM WITH POLISHED GLASS AND FRESH PAINT.

rehabilitating historic structures. Towns that participate connect to a network of groups dedicated to downtown revitalization. The state offers training, marketing and public relations consulting, and design assistance.

Since the program's inception, private investors have put about $264 million into the state's historic downtowns, translating into thousands of new businesses and jobs. Over 4,000 buildings have been rehabilitated.

The program follows a strategy formulated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which determined that marketing was essential to reviving small towns. Businesses had to offer something not found in malls. And they had to band together and not bail out when times got lean.

A GOOD EXAMPLE IS WINCHESTER, at the northern end of the Shenandoah Valley. A welter of plastic signs and fast food restaurants, which greet the visitor initially, soon gives way to downtown charm, anchored by a broad, red brick walkway shaded with stately locust trees. On either side is a collection of architectural styles so dense and varied it momentarily defies description.

Buildings are meticulously preserved, an unmistakable sign of healthy business—chic cafes and coffee shops, Victorians populated with law offices. People move along the street as if they have important business—which they do, here in downtown. Winchester is suffused with a new sense of now, but rich with the texture of then.

Following the itinerary, visitors discover how the town's strategic location—at the northern end of the valley—made it a focal point for trade as well as an important place in the French and Indian War and the American Revolution. During the Civil War, Stonewall Jackson had his headquarters at a house in town, now listed in the National Register.

Winchester changed hands numerous times during the conflict, its 1840 Greek Revival courthouse serving as a hospital. A recent renovation uncovered soldiers' graffiti.

AT THE FAR END OF BERRYVILLE'S MAIN STREET, A FREIGHT TRAIN ROLLS SLOWLY through town with the Blue Ridge in the distance. Architectural styles repeat down the street: Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate. A modest crossroads settled in colonial times, Berryville owed its success to a location along trade routes. It is modest still, the quintessential small town.

When John Singleton Mosby hit Union supply lines, he chose Berryville as the place to strike. Though at the edge of Washington, DC's westward creep, it has kept its character, and when a traveler turns off main street, the town's quiet unpretentiousness is affirmed as houses thin quickly and give way to lush green hills dotted with livestock.

Left: Open for business in Radford, with the signature sound of a nearby railyard a poetic backdrop when this picture was taken. Above left: Signs of the past just around the corner. Above right: Afternoon neon in Bedford.

Left:
Lynchburg's waterfront boasts an arts district with warehouse lofts overlooking the James River; pictured here is Amazement Square, home of the Rightmire Children's Museum, where insect sculptures dance along the sidewalks.

MOST OF THE TOWNS HAVE THEIR ORIGINS IN THE LATE 18TH OR EARLY 19TH CENTURIES, SPRINGING UP AROUND RIVERS, MILLS, RAILROADS, AND TURNPIKES. VIRGINIA'S FLOURISHING AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY, THE TAMING OF RIVERS WITH LOCKS, SLUICES, AND DAMS, AND, EVENTUALLY, THE RAILROAD, ALL CONTRIBUTED TO DEVELOPMENT.

THE HOMES OF OLD WARRENTON evidence its popularity with the well-heeled since colonial times. A Classical Revival courthouse, the historic district's showpiece, was built in 1890. Perched on a knoll, it overlooks the sprawl that caused concerned residents to get the town to join the state initiative. Today, the district has 100 percent retail occupancy. The county jail, built in 1808, is preserved as a museum.

Idyllic and stately, Warrenton was a popular destination for dignitaries from Washington who wanted to spend time in the Virginia countryside. They included Andrew Jackson, the Duchess of Windsor, and Teddy Roosevelt, who made the 50-mile trek on horseback on a January day in 1909, had lunch at the Warren Green Hotel, and rode back to the White House immediately afterward.

The itinerary gives a glimpse of Warrenton's rich past, from its reputation as a cosmopolitan country town to the ever-present background of the Civil War.

HOW TOBACCO LOOMED IN Virginia's history is evident in the small town of Danville, on the North Carolina border. It had a natural route to outside markets in the Dan River, later augmented by the railroad. As tobacco merchants got rich, they sunk their profits into textile manufacturing and extravagant houses, many visible today in the town's historic district. Danville emerged unscathed from the Civil War, and its rehabbed brick warehouses and factory buildings give the place more of an industrial feel than the other towns on the itinerary.

In a notable attempt to capture the essence of the town's bustling past, Danville rehabilitated a row of commercial buildings that were constructed between 1900 and 1930, but covered with a metal facade for a more uniform, streamlined look in the 1950s. The veneer has been stripped off to expose the distinct style of each structure, evocative of Danville's optimistic march into the 20th century.

Along side streets running off the main thoroughfare, commercial buildings proliferate, an indicator of Danville's earlier success. They include former banks, theaters, and fraternal lodges, many of which are now occupied by retail and service businesses. Another sign of Danville's good fortune is the most concentrated collection of Victorian and Edwardian residential architecture in Virginia. This impressive legacy includes an extensive array of styles from the Antebellum era to World War I.

THE TOUR FOLLOWS THE SPINE OF THE BLUE RIDGE WITH STOPS AT Staunton, Lexington, Radford, and elsewhere. Visitors discover one architectural showcase after another, explore country churches, railroad depots, a theater from the 1920s, and the grand houses of politicos, generals, and industrialists. The itinerary offers in-depth commentary on the evolution of the architecture, transportation patterns, agriculture, and industry that shaped what the visitor sees today. Web pages link to individual sites, and there are suggested readings for those who want to delve deeper into the region's history.

Above left and center: Lynchburg's masterworks top a series of hills that look out on the Blue Ridge, some streets still paved with brick. Above right: Antique cars peer through the windows of this stepped facade in downtown, alive with architectural richness.

"Virginia Main Street Communities" was produced in cooperation with the state and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers. To see the itinerary, go to www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/vamainstreet. For more on the Virginia Main Street Program, visit www.dhcd.virginia.gov/mainstreet.

OLMSTED FOR A NEW CENTURY

Three Cities, Three Paths in the Footsteps of the Inspirer

Sliced, diced, and in one case censured, the handiwork of Frederick Law Olmsted and his firm has survived and thrived in different mixes of geography, climate, politics, and history. Here, directors of three groups discuss why: **Susan Rademacher of the Louisville Olmsted Parks Conservancy, Deborah Trimble of the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, and Robert García of the Los Angeles Center for Law in the Public Interest,** who takes inspiration from an Olmsted plan that never was, but might be one day. As budgets shrink for urban parks, these organizations have been critical to carrying on the Olmsted legacy.

Interviewed by Lucy Lawliss National Park Service Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes
and Charles Birnbaum National Park Service Historic Landscape Initiative

Near right: Louisville's Cherokee Park. Center, far right: Fairsted, Olmsted's home and office in Brookline, MA, a national historic site not far from the Longwood Avenue Bridge, part of a system that Olmsted designed for Boston. Opposite: Utility and beauty, prime goals in Olmsted's work, are realized at Cherokee Park.

LAWLISS: Buffalo has the Olmsted firm's first park-and-boulevard system.

TRIMBLE: Yes. In 1868, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., was invited here by a group of businessmen who wanted something similar to Central Park. He was so impressed with Joseph Ellicott's radial street design that he said I'm not going to give you a park, I'm going to give you a system—the first with interconnecting parkways. He picked the locations too, also a first. He came back to do two more parks in the south, and one in the north, Riverside Park.

His vision was to connect them, but the railroads, the river, and geography got in the way.

LAWLISS: Did the city grow out to the parks?

TRIMBLE: They really did govern the city's growth. Delaware Park, now in the center of town, was then on the outskirts. Today, amazingly, the system is mostly intact.

We do have a few major issues. The main one is dealing with the dismantling of Humboldt Parkway, whose median once held eight rows of trees. The city made it an expressway in the late 1950s, disconnecting what is now a very poor African American neighborhood from the rest of the system. This was a huge loss for the entire city.

Delaware Park is cut in half by an expressway along its original bridal path. So even though it's our largest park, with 350 acres, it doesn't feel that way. It's dangerous to cross from one side to the other.

BIRNBAUM: This was when they put schools in the parks?

TRIMBLE: That was a bit later. Our group was founded in 1978, to stop the construction of a magnet school next to the Science Museum, which is in a park. Unfortunately, we lost.

BIRNBAUM: Had things decayed to that point?

TRIMBLE: There was little value in the park system, and horrible leadership. Our parks commissioner went to jail. He even threw chemicals into the lake at Delaware Park so it wouldn't freeze.

RIGHT AND FAR LEFT: TED WATHEN; CENTER LEFT AND NEAR LEFT: ROBERT BURLEY, COURTESY STEPHEN BULGER GALLERY

BIRNBAUM: Susan, Buffalo's experience seems to parallel Louisville's.

RADEMACHER: Yes. We have Frederick Law Olmsted's last system of parks and parkways. His vision was to create three large parks. Each would preserve a different kind of landscape, and together they would meet all the needs that a great urban park should, from sports and recreation, to promenading, to picnicking, to wilderness hiking.

Olmsted focused very much on scenic design, on a multi-dimensional experience. It was about light and shadow, about moving from one elevation to another, about going from closed woods to clearings, about a sense of discovery. He was keenly attuned to the land.

As in Buffalo, there were three parkways heading out to the parks, which were just outside city limits, partly to encourage growth. But they were never connected because growth outstripped park development. Today we're trying to connect them.

The firm continued to work in Louisville, so we have a combination of destination parks—where you'd spend the whole day perhaps traveling cross town on the trolley—and small neighborhood parks where you'd go after work.

The parks both large and small are fairly intact. A tornado and flood hit two of the destination parks; in one, an earth levee now obscures the Ohio River, so you can't take in the 360-degree vista of water and land that Olmsted intended. That's a real disconnect.

An interstate also chopped off the edge of two of the large parks. The good news is that this road, built in the 1960s, created a tremendous movement to save our parks. This was at a time when highway development was a juggernaut.

The outpouring of concern led to several concessions by the state highway department, most notably saving a significant park hill by tunneling underneath instead of blasting through. The department was also compelled to use limestone facing along that section—to capture some of the park's character—and build a bridge for the bridle trail, the only one over an interstate, as far as we know.

BIRNBAUM: Is the system in the National Register of Historic Places?

RADEMACHER: It was listed in 1982, at a time when listings didn't have to be very detailed. We'd like to amend it to include contributing features and the smaller parks, to improve protection.

LAWLISS: Debbie, is your park system listed?

TRIMBLE: Yes. Our listing is pretty extensive, but we'd like to do a little amending also. We're very interested in national landmark status.

RADEMACHER: We are too.

BIRNBAUM: Robert, I know your situation is very different.

GARCÍA: Olmsted Brothers and a local firm, Harland Bartholomew and Associates, prepared a report, published in 1930, called *Parks, Playgrounds and Beaches for the Los Angeles Region*. It envisioned a web of parks, playgrounds, forests, schools, beaches, and transportation that would not only improve L.A.—full of open space at the time—but also promote health and economic vitality for everybody.

The report, commissioned by the chamber of commerce, was killed by the *Los Angeles Times* and other powerful interests in a triumph of private greed over public space. Yet today the report's spirit lives on to inspire advocates to recapture part of the lost beauty of Los Angeles.

The rule of thumb was this: if the plan proposed it, the city did the opposite. The report recommended 71,000 acres of parks, with another 91,000 in outlying areas including access to the forests. The heart of the plan was 214 miles of interconnecting parkways, which would have greened the Los Angeles River. The report called for a doubling of public beach, foreseeing less access as homes on the ocean rose in value.

Today many people don't realize there is a river. It goes 51 miles from the San Fernando Valley through the heart of downtown to the ocean at Long Beach. In 1936, because of chronic floods, the Army Corps of Engineers was called in. They poured concrete along the entire length, to speed the flow to the sea. Now it's the most degraded river in the world. Many think it's a sewer.

The problem was defined as flood control. If other options had been considered, like giving children a place to play or having runoff percolate into a natural bottom, the outcome would have been different.

LAWLISS: How did you reclaim the Olmsted vision?

GARCÍA: About five or six years ago, Mike Davis, in his book *The Ecology of Fear*, had a chapter called "How Eden Lost Its Garden" that talked about the Olmsted report. That sent me looking for a copy. Only about 200 copies were printed, but I finally I found one at USC. We've made hundreds of copies since; some of the maps are in color.

I'm the Johnny Appleseed of the report. We have a digital edition made with GIS mapping software. It's Olmsted for the 21st century.

The Olmsted plan is our group's driving vision. Had it been adopt-

"THE OLMSTED PLAN IS OUR GROUP'S DRIVING VISION. HAD IT BEEN ADOPTED, TODAY LOS ANGELES WOULD BE ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL CITIES. INSTEAD IT'S PARK POOR, WITH FEWER ACRES PER 1,000 RESIDENTS THAN ANY MAJOR CITY." —ROBERT GARCÍA, CENTER FOR LAW IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Above left: Judith Baca's mural "The Great Wall of Los Angeles" depicts freeways dissecting East L.A. while residents are removed for Dodger Stadium. Above center: Proposed L.A. school with premium outdoor space. Above right: Taylor Yard, abutting the Los Angeles River, site of a new park that will help resurrect Olmsted's vision of green space in the city.

ed, today Los Angeles would be one of the world's most beautiful cities. Instead it's park poor, with fewer acres per 1,000 residents than any major urban area. And there are disparities based on race, ethnicity, income, and access to a car. In the inner city there are .3 acres per 1,000 residents compared to 1.7 acres in white, relatively wealthy L.A. That's six times as much.

But everyone is bad off. The national standard is 6 to 10 acres per 1,000. And instead of green parkways, we got a city sliced up by concrete channels, with no transit to the trails or the national forests, and rich homeowners trying to cut off access to the beach.

There is good news. The urban park movement, which we fostered, has succeeded in creating some major new parks: in Taylor Yard along the river, in Ascot Hills, in Latino East L.A., and in Baldwin Hills, the historic African American heart of Los Angeles. The flagship is the Cornfield, a 32-acre site in the heart of downtown.

About five years ago, the city and Ed Roske, one of the nation's wealthiest men, wanted to build warehouses without doing an environmental impact report. This area was the Ellis Island of Los Angeles where every major racial and ethnic group came through. It's right down the street from El Pueblo de Los Angeles, where the first European settlers arrived in about 1780, close to the largest Native American village at the time.

We spearheaded one of the most diverse alliances ever behind an issue. Now it's going to be a state park. The *Los Angeles Times* has called it a heroic monument and symbol of hope. And we've had other victories since.

BIRNBAUM: Is the Olmsted name a rallying point, a brand name?

TRIMBLE: It really helped when we did signage identifying the Olmsted parks with a gold tree. There was little public recognition before that. People love the national significance—until they want a new soccer field. And we've drawn the 20-somethings into philanthropy with their version of a black-tie special event—a summer bash with a bandstand floating in the lake.

RADEMACHER: Over the last 14 years, there has been enough media coverage here, enough visible change, that we have a high level of penetration. People know that an Olmsted park is something special, a tremendous point of pride in a neighborhood.

We're working with a number of disenfranchised areas here in town, and with kids through the schools. We did a documentary with local public television. One of the challenges is getting civic leaders to see the work of Olmsted's sons as worth saving too.

GARCÍA: I bring so much bad news I wonder why you asked me in on the interview. Remember, this is Los Angeles, the city famous for forgetting its history. Everything is a hard sell.

That said, the Olmsted plan was developed before the environmental movement, before the civil rights movement, before smart growth. It's simply a good idea. That's marketable. Today, five years into our campaign, officials use the words "Olmsted plan" a lot more.

Our thrust is to create a heritage parkscape that links about 100 cultural, historical, and environmental sites throughout the region. Signage is important. Look at the trail markers at San Francisco's Golden Gate National Recreation Area. They give the sense that the city is one big park. L.A. should do this, too.

BIRNBAUM: The parks are part nature, part culture. How do you deal with that divide?

TRIMBLE: These are living, breathing landscapes. You want to respect the vision but at the same time the parks are vibrant gathering places.

Olmsted wasn't a huge fan of flowers but, as in Central Park, we want to mark the entrances as a special place. In today's mindset that often means more color in the plantings.

RADEMACHER: We start with the genius of the place, using native materials to punch up the experience. The firm used the phrase "aesthetic forestry" to describe showy native flowering trees in greater profusion around the edges, a heightened effect than what you'd get naturally.

Olmsted, Sr., had an experimental bent. We seek a richer natural palette, a more expressive ecological fabric that befits the experience that he intended. When there's a conflict with his intent, we experiment a little bit, observe, and adjust.

GARCÍA: Certainly for Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., parks and civil rights were his twin passions. This motivates our work in Los Angeles, where people of color and low income suffer first and worst



from lack of parks. We want a better community for all. We emphasize that message to a range of stakeholders.

L.A. has over $14 billion—with a B—to build and modernize schools. That will add 240 acres of open space to over 2,000 acres of schoolyards. There's a lot of potential. We're about bringing the simple choice of playing outdoors to the children of Los Angeles. Closely related to that is the issue of health.

In the L.A. school district, the second largest in the country, 87 percent of the children are not physically fit. In 40 of the schools, zero—none—are. It's not that they're fat and lazy and spend too much time watching video games. They simply don't have enough places to play. This has larger implications. Male athletes are four times more likely to get into an Ivy League school. For girls the advantage is greater.

Parks provide green space, cool air, and clear water. And we emphasize economic value in terms of increasing property values, creating jobs for small businesses, and providing jobs for local workers.

For the Cornfield, we went to Cardinal Mahoney for support from the spiritual community. He asked why should he worry about a park with so many other problems here. We said because of the wider implications. He personally wrote to the governor and state leaders. Guatemalan Nobel Peace Laureate Rigoberta Menchu praised our work as a way of saying no to war, no to violence, and giving our children hope.

Building community from the ground up is one of our goals. Diversifying democracy. Seeing people who have never participated in government stand up to city hall and the wealthy developers—and win.

TRIMBLE: That's the beauty of parks. You become engaged for so many different reasons.

RADEMACHER: The nature part is a lot easier than the culture part. But it means setting down your expectations. You have to really look to understand all the ways of viewing the space, all the desires for using it, and find the balance by working with people.

LAWLISS: What is your vision for the next 20 years? Debbie?

TRIMBLE: Imagine acres of impeccable green space in the heart of the city, with lush gardens, and majestic trees, and children frolicking in fountains of water. Imagine picnickers celebrating family reunions and neighbors fixing up their homes to match the beauty of the parks. That imagery is very powerful in a city that doesn't have a whole lot of pride of late.

Above, right: Buffalo's parks evidence Olmsted's penchant for the pastoral and picturesque, his idea of indefinite boundaries and a constant opening of new views.

LAWLISS: Susan?

RADEMACHER: Debbie used the word beauty. That's very undervalued. We won't have great cities without great parks.

I'd like to see the parks as places where people come together in all the old ways, to play and rub elbows and discover their likenesses amidst their differences, where they put their hands on the land and take ownership in its ongoing care. Unfortunately, I don't see a huge improvement in the ability of the public agencies to manage. It really rests in the hands and hearts of the people.

LAWLISS: Robert?

GARCÍA: Three cities the size of Chicago will move into our region in the next 20 years. If something isn't done, L.A. will simply strangle itself.

There is hope. In the past five years, state voters passed some $10 to $12 billion in park bonds and one of them, so-called Prop 40, demolished the myth that the environment is a luxury that people of color and low income do not care about or can't afford. The proposition—creating a $2.6 billion bond, the largest resource bond in U.S. history—earned the support of 77 percent of black voters, 74 percent of Latinos, 60 percent of Asians, and 56 percent of non-Hispanic whites.

It will take that level of commitment. Olmsted inspired the vision. The people of Los Angeles, and its leaders, must embrace it.

For more information, contact Susan Rademacher, President, Louisville Olmsted Parks Conservancy, email susan.Rademacher@loukymetro.org, www.olmstedparks.org; Deborah Trimble, Executive Director, Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, email info@buffaloolmstedparks.org, www.buffaloolmstedparks.org; and Robert García, Executive Director and Counsel, Center for Law in the Public Interest, email info@clipi.org, www.clipi.org.

Also go to the National Association for Olmsted Parks at www.olmsted.org. This year is the 25th anniversary of the association, founded to foster friends groups and partnerships in support of the Olmsted legacy. Lucy Lawliss is association cochair, email lucy_lawliss@nps.gov; Charles Birnbaum is an association trustee, email charles_birnbaum@nps.gov. The National Park Service Historic Landscape Initiative is at www.cr.nps.gov/hps/hli.

"IMAGINE ACRES OF IMPECCABLE GREEN SPACE IN THE HEART OF THE CITY, WITH LUSH GARDENS, AND MAJESTIC TREES, AND CHILDREN FROLICKING IN FOUNTAINS OF WATER. IMAGINE PICNICKERS CELEBRATING FAMILY REUNIONS AND NEIGHBORS FIXING UP THEIR HOMES TO MATCH THE BEAUTY OF THE PARKS. THAT IMAGERY IS VERY POWERFUL IN A CITY THAT DOESN'T HAVE A WHOLE LOT OF PRIDE OF LATE." —DEBORAH TRIMBLE, BUFFALO OLMSTED PARKS CONSERVANCY

LEFT: BUFFALO OLMSTED CONSERVANCY; BELOW: ROBERT BURLEY, COURTESY STEPHEN BULGER GALLERY

BY JOE FLANAGAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JACK E. BOUCHER

long ago

BY A STREAM IN THE WOODS

THE FALL AND RISE OF FOREST GLEN

ALL PHOTOS JACK E. BOUCHER/NPS/HABS EXCEPT AS NOTED

Left top: *Statue of Hiawatha.* *Left bottom:* *A miniature medieval castle.* *Above:* *Sorority house built in 1903.*

It is a breathtaking sight in the way that grandeur and decay, when they become one, make all comment seem inadequate. The sprawling complex, perched on the edge of a deep wooded ravine, is elegant and tragic. It calls to mind whiskered men in waistcoats, women on nature walks in long skirts and high collars, the social

Left: Perhaps Forest Glen's most exotic touch, the Japanese Pagoda, built in 1905. Above: The school was a perpetual remodeling project, with much of the design done off-the-cuff; the craze created what one historian called "a sense of motley abundance."

CENTER: SAVE OUR SEMINARY

conventions of another era. There is a whiff of the occult and the leaden atmosphere of Victorian ghost stories, a place Edgar Allen Poe probably would have loved. It is a visual extravagance with the feel of a movie set and the ring of history. It leads one to wonder how it has managed to survive, all but hidden in one of the most congested areas of the East Coast.

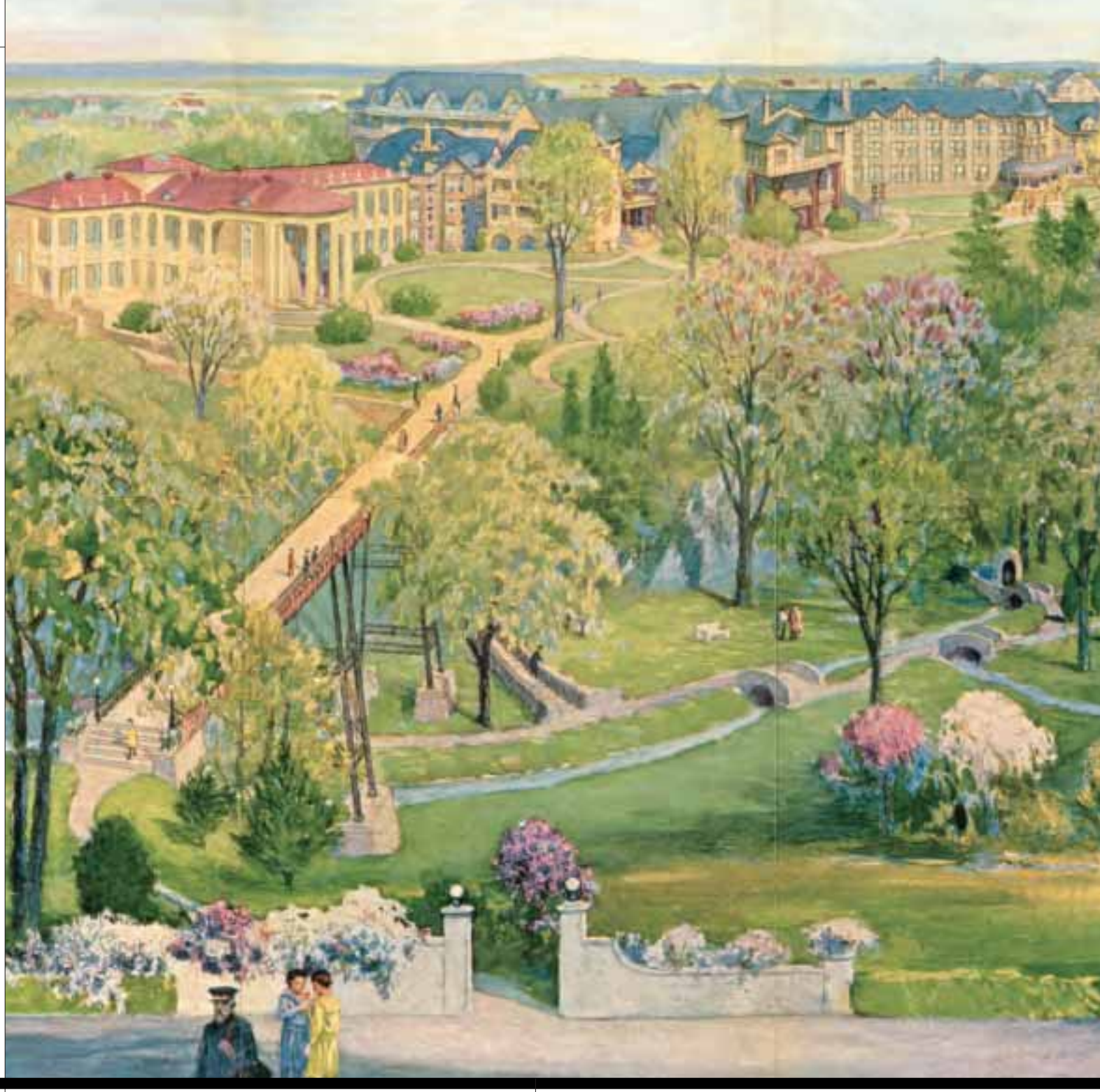
Though just outside Washington, DC, National Park Seminary has moldered for years in relative obscurity. Nonetheless, the struggle over its preservation has gone on for decades, waxing and waning and finally reaching resolution in an ambitious plan for adaptive use. The site's stunning assemblage of architectural styles, along with the natural setting, makes it a historic site like no other.

IT BEGAN AS A COUNTRY RETREAT IN 1887, was a women's school in various guises for much of its existence, and finally was converted into an Army medical facility. More recently, it has been a cause celebre for local preservationists.

It has been called an albatross and a gem. It has been flooded, burned, vandalized, torn apart, redone, negotiated over, slated for demolition, and brought back from the brink. Now comes another incarnation. In 2006 it will be restored as the centerpiece of a new development designed by a pair of firms that specialize in integrating historic properties into the modern fabric. The process will be monitored by the National Park Service, the Maryland Historical Trust, the Montgomery County Historical Commission, and the site's dogged advocate, the nonprofit Save Our Seminary.

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the site is also called Forest Glen, a name that goes back to a time when this part of town was considered country. The visual anchor is a huge and rambling Queen Anne edifice, originally a resort hotel, The Forest Inn.

The years saw unbridled architectural experimentation, which left what one histo-



SAVE OUR SEMINARY

rian calls "a sense of motley abundance." A Japanese pagoda, a castle in miniature, a Greek temple, an Italianate villa, a grotto and statuary—the effect goes from brooding to playful.

From 1887 to 1927, National Park Seminary was a perpetual remodeling project. Eventually the main building was joined to those surrounding it, forming a broad arc overlooking the 300-foot wide ravine. The Capital Beltway, with its steady hum of tires, peers through the trees on the other side.

"It's the last surviving example of Victorian resort architecture in the region," says Richard Shaeffer, one of the founders of Save Our Seminary. "And there were so many."

FOREST GLEN WAS ONCE PART OF A HUGE TRACT—thousands of acres—issued by Lord Baltimore to a prominent local figure, Joseph Baker, in 1688. Many such parcels, all along nearby Rock Creek, were given out to wealthy merchants and planters, who saw them mainly as investments. The wooded slopes were ill-suited to agriculture, so the area changed little as tobacco transformed the tidewater regions of the Chesapeake.

The late 1800s, however, saw new interest, due to "changing cultural values and attitudes towards nature," says historian Cynthia Ott, who wrote a report for the Historic American Buildings Survey of the National Park Service, which documented the semi-

Above: ***The sprawling campus depicted about 1926.***

nary in the current-day photographs you see here. "New artistic and literary tastes rejected the previous generation's penchant for formal, clipped landscapes," Ott says, "and extolled the aesthetic and moral value of wild and rough natural scenery." The Rock Creek area was picturesque, healthful, and, if you had the money to invest, profitable.

This was the age of the country resort. A fitness craze swept the country, with men's sporting clubs, rustic getaways, and "cure cottages" for people with tuberculosis. The entire family could escape to resorts in the Adirondacks and the Catskills. Many such places sprouted outside urban centers, perceived to be in physical and moral decline. Rail and trolley lines made it all possible.

Washington boomed after the Civil War. The 1883 Civil Service Act made government a lifetime career, not a temporary job dismissed by incoming administrations. As the city exploded, people wanted out. The Cabin John Bridge Hotel, the Glen Echo Chautaqua, the Woodlawn Hotel, the Chevy Chase Inn, and Bethesda Park all ran ads in the paper, with dozens more resorts sprouting up within 50 miles of the city, most in Maryland.

The Forest Inn opened its doors in 1887, an enterprise of the Forest Glen Improvement Co., run by some of Washington's most powerful men. They shared a vision of the city as a cultural and

A Dutch windmill topped the crest of the ravine, overlooking a medieval castle, complete with drawbridge. A theater's grand columns combined the colonial and the classical. Complementing the tableau were an Italian villa, dense with ornament, mission-style houses, and the emblem of the place's quirkiness—a Japanese pagoda with upturned eaves.

political Mecca, whose growth would make them rich. The inn would lure people to look at nearby house lots for sale, also owned by the company, a common practice.

The railroad ran near where the beltway is now, with Forest Glen station about a quarter mile away. Easy access was a selling point, as was nearby Rock Creek Park, established in 1890. Proximity to this 1,700-acre swath of wilderness enhanced the inn's exclusiveness and isolation.

Today, a circular drive rolls up to the remains of a fountain, bereft of its top tier and the heads of its decorative figures. You see what on any given summer day would have been a bustling porch with the words "Ye Forest Inne" in stained glass above the entrance. On a mild winter day, cold air flows out from an unseen open window, or perhaps from a hole in the masonry, carrying the signature smell of old attics and dank basements everywhere: the scent of time itself.

No one knows how many guests came and went. Thousands of young women graduated and headed off into the world. The lonesome drone of the tires in the distance underscores how thoroughly they have disappeared.

MUCH OF THE INN REMAINS TODAY: a large wraparound porch (which visitors enjoyed in rocking chairs and settees), balconies, dormers, and turrets with conical slate roofs. The inside features coffered ceilings, wood wainscoting, inglenooks, and stained glass. Floor-to-ceiling windows bring the outdoors in.

Many resorts were summer residences too. Here at the inn, husbands took the train to town during the week, while their children enjoyed the outdoors and their wives took in the atmosphere and the finery. Resorts were "models of the idyllic suburban home that their female guests could aspire to emulate," says Ott.

In time, business dropped, probably due to the distance from the rail stop; competitors like the Chevy Chase Inn were right on the trolley line. With the financial crisis of 1893, the place closed. The nation's transportation network was getting better; now people could go farther out from the city, and they did. The suburban resort became an anachronism.

When John and Vesta Cassedy came to look at the failed inn in 1894, they saw the perfect place for a school for women. Both were teachers, and John was an entrepreneur. Their dynamism was evident in periodic building sprees.

SCHOOLS LIKE THE SEMINARY, THOUGH THIS WAS A FEMINIST era, espoused the traditional, molding the daughters of the moneyed class into cultivated ladies. In an increasingly crowded and industrialized world, the home was more than ever a refuge. Women, says Ott, were "the family's, and by extension, society's, moral arbiters and spiritual caretakers."

"Soul training is the special feature of our school," says a seminary catalogue of 1898. "A daughter needs, above all, that the windows of her soul should be thrown wide open to the universe of beauty, her sentient being must be thrilled with exquisite emotions [and her] heart must pulsate with the heart-life of humanity as expressed in divinest forms. In a word, she must have Artistic Culture."

The surroundings, and the statuary, were part of the curriculum. "Nature and artifice were combined to create a didactic natural environment," says Ott.

Much of what remains today is from the Cassedy era—19 buildings and numerous alterations done between 1894 and 1916. They took much of their inspiration from designs they saw at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago.

Behind the inn, the Cassedys built an ornate bungalow for themselves. Beside that, a chapel. A Dutch windmill topped the crest of the ravine,

SAVE OUR SEMINARY

Left: The gymnasium, one of Forest Glen's most impressive structures, as it appears today. The failing roof is currently supported by scaffolding. Above: The gymnasium in 1925.

overlooking a medieval castle, complete with drawbridge. A theater's grand columns combined the colonial and the classical. Complementing the tableau were an Italian villa, dense with ornament, mission-style houses, and the emblem of the place's quirkiness, a Japanese pagoda with upturned eaves.

Many of the buildings were sorority houses, where young women convened under the supervision of a house mother. It was a reflection of a national trend, the women's club movement, a way to engage in social issues and develop an identity outside the home. In other buildings, future housewives honed homemaking skills aimed at helping lead "effective and sympathetic lives." And though none of them was likely to work, there was instruction in cooking, dressmaking, bookkeeping, and stenography, should the need arise. Among the lectures were "The Uses of Ugliness," "The Nobility of Sacrifice," and "Requirements of Good Breeding." There were courses in art, music, drama, Latin, Greek, and literature. On the rolls were women with names like Chrysler, Maytag, Heinz, and Kraft. Ty Cobb sent his daughter here.

IN 1916, JOHN CASSEDY, NOW AN AGED WIDOWER, sold the school to James Ament and Clifton Trees, a Pittsburgh oil baron. The end of World War I brought another boom. The pair snatched up land in the vicini-

Left: Students picnic at a stone cottage by the edge of a stream. Below: The mythical figure Cyparissus, then and now.

LEFT AND BELOW LEFT: SAVE OUR SEMINARY

ty, betting on the next wave of suburban development. Ament took over the school and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars turning it into a palatial estate. He built a grand ballroom, his pride and joy, and transformed the gymnasium into a Greek palace. There were urns and sculpture everywhere. Tudor timbering did away with the rustic look; the place now had the appearance of an English manor.

The stock market crash crippled the school, and it was purchased in 1937 by Roy Tasco Davis, a foreign service officer turned educator. Davis was not interested in running a finishing school. He established a serious curriculum with seasoned academics.

In 1942, nearby Walter Reed Army Hospital confiscated the place under the War Powers Act, giving Davis $850,000. The seminary was a convalescent home through the Korean and Vietnam Wars, where soldiers underwent physical therapy and amputees worked on practical tasks such as learning how to board a streetcar. A prosthetics research lab was on the site.

The Army remodeled interiors, and original wooden stairways were replaced with concrete for fire safety. Four utilitarian buildings went up. Ornament was out, functionality was in.

By 1967, dogged by expensive maintenance and repair, the Army drew up a demolition plan. By this time locals had a fondness for the place, seen as a public park. There was a call for preservation. The Army backed off, but in the early '70s, had a new idea—garden apartments for military families—one of several over the years to take down the buildings, now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1988, with the property still untouched and all but vacant, local preservationists founded Save Our Seminary. A new Army demolition plan followed, and the theater burned down in 1993. By now, rot and decay flourished as vigorously as the Victorian cloister had in its heyday. After the fire, Save Our Seminary and the National Trust for Historic Preservation sued the Army, which finally decided to let go of the property in 1999.

This started a formal process known as "excessing," in which government agencies could acquire the property. If there was no interest, there would be a public auction. Says Bonnie Rosenthal, former executive director of Save Our Seminary, "There was a lot of concern that there would be no control over who got the property and how they would treat it."

The group lobbied the county to step in, which it did, to facilitate preservation. Says Rosenthal, "We almost knew from the beginning that a public body

could not handle this property. It was too big, too deteriorated."

The Maryland State Historic Preservation Office got involved too. The idea was to put a preservation easement on the place, under which no alterations could be made without approval. The county entertained proposals from developers. The Alexander Co. and Eakin/Youngentob Associates purchased the site from the county for a dollar, but the real payoff was the developers' vision of adaptive use that will restore Forest Glen.

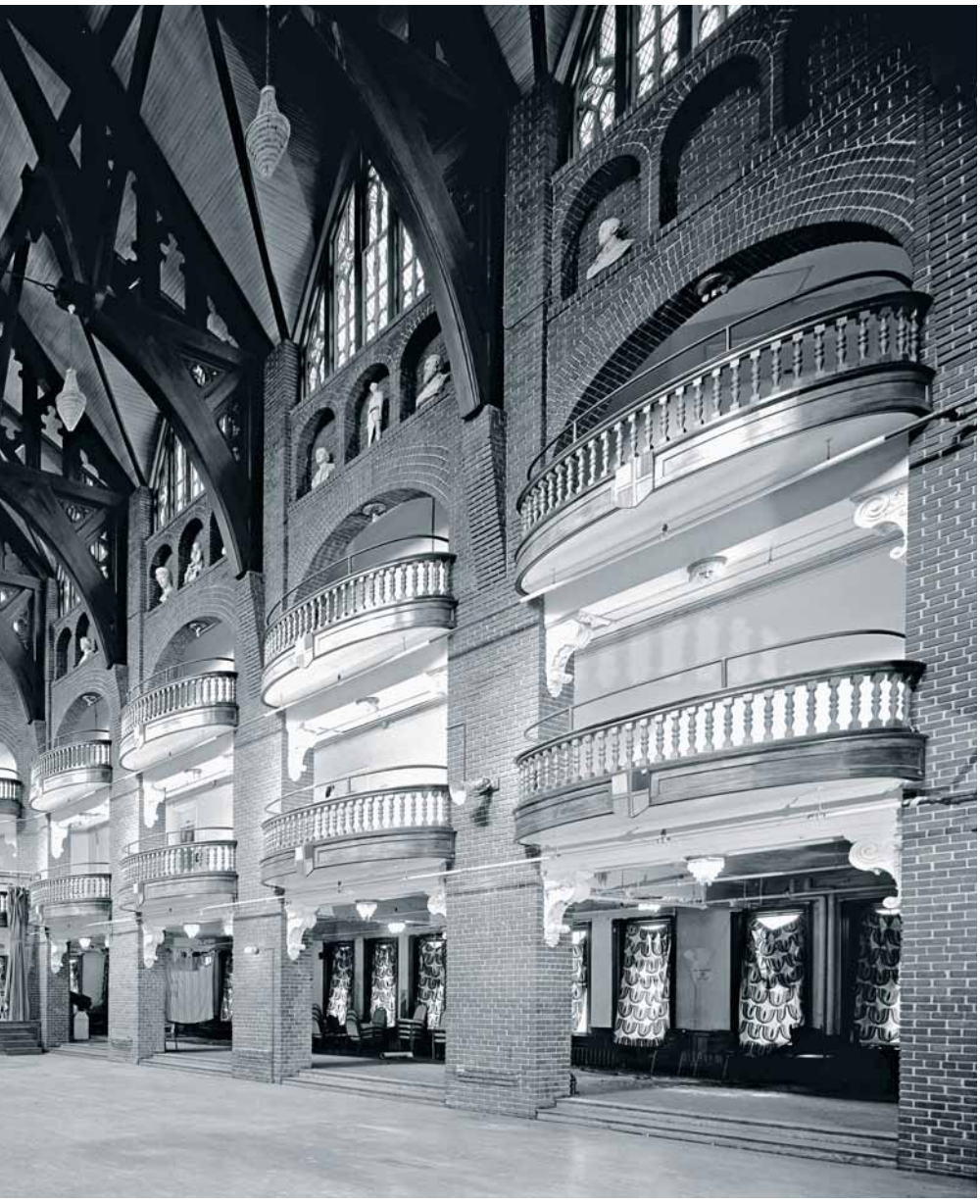
This fall, the inn will start its transformation into 66 multi-family rental units, 51 condominiums, and 13 single-family houses. A portion of the apartments will be affordable housing, as required by the county.

The developers will get tax credits under the historic preservation tax incentives program administered by the National Park Service, contingent on rehabilitating the buildings to standards set by the Secretary of the Interior. Many players have a stake; the Maryland State Historic Preservation Office and the county will evaluate the rehabilitation, a condition of acquiring the property.

Both firms have won numerous awards. Says Rosenthal, "I have a lot of faith in this team. They get it. They understand the property. They see that it can't be lost."

The seminary grounds—very popular among hikers and photographers—will be preserved, with interpretive signs to orient visitors to good views of the buildings. "The developers intend for it to be open," says SOS president Fred Gervasi. "People will be welcomed to the property."

The numerous structures built by Ament and the Cassedys—the



In 1988, with the property untouched and all but vacant, preservationists founded Save Our Seminary. A new Army demolition plan soon followed, and the theater burned down in 1993. By now, rot and decay flourished as vigorously as the earlier Victorian cloister had in its heyday.

Far left: ***Students in the school's grand ballroom circa 1920.*** *Near left:* ***The ballroom today.***

old sorority houses and assorted outbuildings—will be rehabbed and turned into a mix of condos and single-family homes. The grand ballroom, returned to its glory, will host community events. The developers will work with the National Park Service to pinpoint all areas considered historically significant. Of the new infill structures—98 townhouses and single-family homes—about half will be sited in what is considered the historic district, with the others spreading out into the flat terrain behind the seminary. The new will not imitate the old, says Gervasi. "The SHPO wanted no confusion in people's minds."

DESPITE CONCERN OVER HOUSING DENSITY AND POTENTIAL TRAFFIC, the level of support in the community is considerable, Gervasi says. "You have a large project in a small area with minimal opposition. That's fairly rare"—especially in an economy that quickly devours open space.

Those who spent years struggling to save Forest Glen knew it was more than a curiosity in the woods; they saw it as an eloquent witness to a time long past. And thanks to them, in the words of Ott, "the naive frivolity and exuberance of the 'age of innocence' has survived intact."

For more information, contact Save Our Seminary, P.O. Box 8274, Silver Spring, MD 20907, (301) 589-1715, email info@saveoursemi-nary.org or visit the web site at www.saveoursem-inary.org. The developers' web page is at www.nationalparkseminary.com.

Above: Bethlehem Steel today. Going to work was "like going down to 'The Wizard of Oz' or 'Alice in Wonderland,'" recalls Bob Shoemaker at steelworkersarchives.com.

A Steel Town Seeks New Life

REBIRTHING BETHLEHEM

Written and Photographed by David Andrews

Tony Hanna points the nose of his decommissioned police cruiser toward the heart of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania—the rubble-strewn landscape of a once-mighty manufacturing leviathan. "Don't have to worry about the shocks,"

ALL PHOTOS DAVID ANDREWS/NPS

says Hanna, the city's director of community and economic development. A police band hugs the bottom of the dash in case we get stuck, unlikely with the horses under the hood. Up ahead looms the machinery of myth—5 blast furnaces, 20 stories high—which in their ruinous splendor tower over the story of America's industrial hegemony, as long gone as the last century.

The Steel, as they call it around here, seemed invincible once. Its wide-flange beams built much of the Manhattan skyline—the Empire State, the Chrysler Building, the United Nations, Madison Square Garden. Now its dark, angular features haunt with their ghostly visage. The furnace complex—beautifully malignant in the morning mist—shakes and creaks in the wind, piercing the silence that shrouds the site.

In the afterlife, the Steel has become a deity. Pilgrims skirt a rail yard, and a keep-out sign, to peer through a chain-link fence at the rear of the property. They're quick to share stories of lives defined by the mill—their own lives, the lives of husbands, the lives of uncles and cousins. These aren't just old folks. A couple has their picture taken in full wedding regalia. A TV producer comes camera in hand, all the way from New York City; he heard the site was endangered.

"It's the only place where you have a mass of furnaces still standing," pipes up Allen Sachse, director of the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, from the cruiser's back seat. "It's the only integrated site left, where you can see the entire process of making steel. And walking from west to east, you see the evolution of steelmaking from its very beginning to the very end. There's no place left like that in the Pittsburgh area," home of U.S. Steel, where the only like mill larger than this one was demolished for a shopping mall.

Hanna says the goal is to save "the most sacred of the sacred." A plan for a Smithsonian-affiliated museum—potentially as the site centerpiece—makes this a tantalizing possibility. But its fate hangs on fundraising. Another plan, with deep pockets, envisions a slots parlor as the anchor, the museum less central to a major makeover. But some don't like the link to gambling, let alone the crime potential. Like the rest of rustbelt America, Bethlehem has some tough choices ahead.

In the afterlife, the Steel has become a deity. Pilgrims skirt a rail yard, and a keep-out sign, to peer through a chain-link fence at the rear of the property. They're quick to share stories of lives defined by the mill—their own lives, the lives of husbands, the lives of uncles and cousins.

Above left: A virtual city of industry. Above right: Window on a void. Opposite: Yawning emptiness looks out on the main drag of Bethlehem's South Side. "I drive through here and I see all the buildings that were torn down," recalls Jerry Green at steelworkersarchives.com. "I miss the dirt on the cars because I knew there was thousands of jobs that went with that."

YOU ROLL OFF THE INTERSTATE EXPECTING A TIRED OLD TOWN. Instead, "you get this delightful village, beautifully preserved," says Steve Lubar, former head of the National Museum of American History's technology division, who helped brainstorm the idea for the Smithsonian affiliation. "The steel mill is only part of this city," he says.

There are two Bethlehems, split literally and symbolically by the plant. To the north, regal century-old houses, built by steel execs, look down from atop a cliff face, mingled with tidy brick buildings erected by the city's Moravian founders. On the South Side, Lehigh University's gothic towers overlook a fledgling arts district, picturesque hilly streets, and funky rowhouses inhabited by students, professors, artists, and an ethnic working class encompassing the Steel's descendants.

Right: **Catwalks across the furnace complex. "When you walked through some of the shops where they made the big shafts, it would mesmerize you," says Paul Coachys. "[But] the most impressive part was the danger."**

Their employer "was one of the great steel mills," says Lubar, now director of Brown University's John Nicholas Brown Center and professor of American civilization. "During World Wars I and II, it was about the most important producer of military goods in the country." Armor and armament built the place. The Russo-Japanese conflict pitted Bethlehem steel against Bethlehem steel, both sides armed by the works.

The plant has its roots in the early 19th century. "It exemplifies the transition from the small, local iron foundries, which dotted the countryside, to the much larger, more controlled, more high-tech kind of place," Lubar says.

The works rolled its first steel in 1873, then took off in the 1880s, re-tooling the American fleet. After a face-off with Chile—new owners of British-built battle cruisers—the Navy decided to mothball its wooden boats and muzzle-loading cannons (the Civil War ironclads had been sold or left to rust).

Armored prows plied the global economy. "Trade follows the flag," was a common aphorism, says *Forging America: The History of Bethlehem Steel*, produced by the Bethlehem *Morning Call*. "That meant that a country pulled up with a big ship, put its guns out, raised its flag, and negotiated an unequal treaty [to] force the weaker country to buy goods. Countries that didn't have big ships with big guns didn't get respect."

Flush with steel orders, the South Side became a semi-feudal city, ruled by an elite who lived in the fashionable Fountain Hill district to the west. The owners sought a lord-and-peasant relationship with their employees, providing schools, a hospital, and athletics in exchange for work at the plant and an implied promise to defer to their betters. Episcopalians, they looked back to the ancestor of their faith, the Church of England, which saw workers as part of the family, and medieval times, with peasants under the castle's protection, as it were.

Yet the place "was the nearest thing to hell on earth," says *Forging America*. "The early iron- and steelmaking processes did not have electric power, so all machinery movement was steam-driven and hydraulic." This made for a deadly mix of tedium, danger, and savage heat.

A new century and owner, Charles Schwab, ushered in the era of the modern corporation. Frederick Taylor, father of scientific management, timed a worker's every move to maximize motion; this was the optimum in production control.

"Schwab, a Catholic from the western part of the state, tutored in steel by hardened industrialists Carnegie and Morgan, didn't fit in with the old Episcopal elite," says *Forging America*. "Nor did he try to fit in. His goal was [to] make lots of steel as cheaply as possible and keep using the profits to modernize and expand." Merit, not religion or race, defined your place in the pecking order. "The master hustler," his friend Thomas Edison called him.

The Steel galloped into the 20th century. Schwab gambled on a new product—the wide-flange beam—and rode rocketing real estate in New York and Chicago. During World War I, intending to trump international arms makers like Vickers and Krupp, he grew rich on customers courted overseas.

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Above: "Like walking inside a volcano," remembers Joe Wilfinger about the furnace complex. "I always tell my wife, I don't worry about going to heaven, I've already been to hell. I worked at the steel company."

Now an empire with mines, shipyards, and railroads, the Steel roared into the '20s, then went great guns during the next war and its booming aftermath.

Modern methods were not confined to the factory floor—or the boardroom. Golf and the game of business went hand in hand, said Eugene Grace, Schwab's successor. "Any man who does not talk about his business on the golf course doesn't really care about his business," he told the *New York World Telegram*.

"There were separate country clubs, one for each level of manager," says Lubar. Corporate managers dominated the rolls of the Saucon Valley Country Club; plant managers had the Bethlehem Steel Club. Black angus was raised on club grounds so execs could enjoy the freshest filet mignon, cooked up by company chefs. A new headquarters—the city's lone skyscraper, in the shape of an x—yielded enough corner offices for a top-heavy hierarchy. Welcome escorts, patterned after flight attendants, greeted visitors, stopping traffic in their elegant plaid dresses off the racks of Manhattan boutiques. New York models showed them how to walk, talk, hold their hands, and gracefully open elevators. When an ambassador or prime minister appeared at one of the country clubs, the escorts were there, too, says *Forging America*.

The mill was a money-printing machine. Sales for 1953 were five times 1939's.

AFTER DECADES OF STRIFE AND STRIKES, THE WORKERS MADE A PLAY for their share. Public pressure had already brought some relief, yielding an 8-hour day. And over time, prodded by an increasingly militant workforce, Schwab and those who came after re-assumed the role of "Father Bethlehem," offering a new brand of paternalism. Still, "if a man entered the mill at age 20, he could expect to live seven years less than someone working in an office," says *Forging America*. "So many employees lost fingers and limbs that some sections of the plant were nicknamed the 'chop shop.'"

In late 1945, eight workers were killed by a gas leak, says *Forging America,* half of the year's death total. That was enough. On January 19, 1946, nearly a million steelworkers walked off the job in Bethlehem and across the country. It was the biggest strike ever.

The rank and file got a slice of the pie, and conditions improved. They enjoyed the fruits of the suburbs, spurring the production of cars and appliances. The Steel was a way to the middle class, jobs now a virtual birthright. Despite the prosperity, the seeds of the downslide may have already been planted.

"As far as I can tell, the place didn't make economic sense after World War II," says Lubar. "It's not on any navigable waterways. The company eventually put its money on new plants at Sparrows Point in Baltimore and Burns Harbor outside of Chicago. Those

The Steel galloped into the 20th century. Schwab gambled on a new product—the wide flange beam—and rode rocketing real estate in New York and Chicago. During World War I, intending to trump international arms makers like Vickers and Krupp, he grew rich on customers courted overseas.

Above: The furnaces loom over an older era's remains. In the early years, the Irish were "particularly troublesome," says *Forging America*. "They would work intensively for awhile, then walk off the job whenever they wanted." Later, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Turks, Ukranians, Greeks, Italians, Mexicans, and others joined them in the low-paid work. During the Depression, says *Forging America,* they really had to stay in good graces. "It wasn't just a matter of knowing the right person. It was also how many pigs, ducks, and cigars they could give their bosses."

Left: Windows open, nobody home. Some peg the plant's demise partly on the union's past practices clause, designed to address worker fears of being replaced by machines. If a job took three workers, three workers would always be assigned to it, even with advancing technology. Pay, on the upswing by the '50s and '60s, would not go down, either.

places made a lot more sense for a modern steel mill. Like many old plants, it managed after the war because there wasn't any competition." Over time, international competitors, a trend away from skyscrapers, and mini-mills—which make steel from scrap—dealt death blows. International Steel Group bought the company in 2003, bailing on the enormous pension liability, which fell to the U.S. Government. Now retirees get a lower check and no healthcare. "That's one of the expenses the big old steel mills have that the new ones don't," says Lubar.

ISG sold the plant last fall. Now, he says, "there's no end to the finger-pointing, whether the end came from mismanagement, union rules, pensions, whatever."

Today, weeds have supplanted workers. The Steel stands silent and shuttered, block after block of peeling brick, scaling rust, and catwalks to nowhere. Industrial parks have invaded most of the four-mile stretch. Only one parcel remains, 120-plus acres of prime history, the soul of the site.

AS THE END DREW NEAR, THE COMPANY FIXED ITS EYES ON SAVING a shred of its legacy. "The thing I thought admirable was that Bethlehem Steel could have put a fence around the place and walked away," says Lubar. "They encouraged something different."

He first stepped on the site in the spring of 1996, after U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York suggested Smithsonian involvement. "It was absolutely amazing," he says. "Here was the whole history of steel, dense with four- and six-story industrial buildings, many still full of machines. The first instinct was to save everything, but they've done a fair job of preserving the historically most interesting parts." Some structures were lost during site cleanup.

Today, weeds have supplanted workers. The Steel stands silent and shuttered, block after block of peeling brick, scaling rust, and catwalks to nowhere. Industrial parks have invaded most of the four-mile stretch. Only one parcel remains, 120-plus acres of prime history, the soul of the site.

Initially, he was looking to store artifacts. Then, in conversations with a nonprofit created by the company, the dream grew to a full-blown national museum of industry. At the core would be material collected for the Smithsonian exhibit about the 1876 centennial celebration of U.S. independence in Philadelphia, which trumpeted the nation's entry upon the world industrial stage.

Big objects are a problem for museums. "If the Smithsonian wanted a rolling mill, we couldn't move it, we couldn't store it, and we couldn't display it," Lubar says. "You need 20-foot ceilings, floors that hold enormous weight. This was perfect."

The nonprofit, calling itself the National Museum of Industrial History, had already talked to a group of Disney imagineers who'd spun off their own company after a proposal soured for a history theme park in Manassas, Virginia. "They had some spectacular plans," Lubar says. "They wanted to capture the drama of steel using light and heat and all the tricks you see in Disney World. They wanted video to make you feel like you're rolling on a rolling mill. One problem was, with Disney there always has to be some sort of disaster narrowly averted. That's not the way industrial plants work. The trick is a thrill that's accurate—but one that people will pay 20 bucks a head to see."

NMIH put forth a stirring vision for the site. No. 2 Machine Shop—once the world's largest enclosed industrial space, a third of a mile long—would house the museum. The NMIH website (www.nmih.org) shows how well the space would dramatize industrial-size objects, America's story writ large.

"The building was a natural, essentially eight stories with plenty of alcoves for exhibits," says NMIH president Steve Donches. "We're talking about three centuries of industrial America on a real site. This can't be done on this scale anywhere else." The intent was

Left, above: Aglow in early evening. "We believe the architecture will drive this site as a destination for the entire East Coast," new co-owner Michael Perrucci told the local press in detailing the casino plan. The proposal envisions climbing walls, boat rides, and light shows reproducing the sights and sounds of steelmaking. Retooled ore cars would transport visitors along the plant's elevated railway.

Right: The shadows of late morning fall on rusted metal.

to illustrate the building of the nation. The Smithsonian lent no funds, but something more valuable—its name.

The museum, central to a larger plan NMIH proposed for the site, was in line with the state's brownfields program, launched because developers were chewing up farmland and open space, scared off urban sites by cleanup requirements. The program facilitated re-use, with over 100 tons of contaminated soil carted away.

FOR ALL THE FEUDING OVER THE PLANT'S DEMISE, RESIDENTS are united in one thing, says Mike Kramer of Save Our Steel, a watchdog group that heightens community awareness: "They really want the Smithsonian museum." The city wants it too, deciding early on not to chase smokestacks for redevelopment.

But with the fate of the place in the air, fundraising was slow. A potential developer could back the museum proposal, or come up with another plan altogether. NMIH didn't have dibs on the machine shop, only on a much smaller building, the electrical shop, intended as a preview center for the museum. If NMIH couldn't find funds or a simpatico developer, the dream would likely die. The Steel could go under for a big-box mall, if that's what an owner wanted.

The site's absence from the tax rolls was incentive to go looking for a developer. Michael Schweder, president of the city council, went to Cleveland, New York, Philadelphia, and elsewhere. City staffers spent thousands of hours crafting creative schemes tapping federal, state, and county monies. More than $12 million went into gussying up the site with a paved road, street furniture, sidewalks, and abstract sculpture recalling the site's story. The city committed $7 million in tax incentives. It was a ripe slice of real estate for the right eyes.

Last fall, new owners bought the site: the principals of Manhattan developer Newmark & Company—one of the nation's largest independent real estate agencies—along with local attorney Michael Perrucci and New York attorney Richard Fischbein. They called themselves BethWorks Now, LLC. Newmark, handling $4.5 billion a year in transactions, helped underwrite Manhattan's rehabbed Flatiron Building and a chunk of revitalized Brooklyn waterfront.

Shortly thereafter, BethWorks Now rolled out a partner—the Las Vegas Sands—and a plan. A slots parlor replaced the museum as the centerpiece.

Not a seedy casino with one-arm bandits and a neon cowboy out front. "We intend to build a city within a city," Perrucci told the press. The group unfurled a budget of nearly a billion dollars, with a promise of over 5,000 jobs. But a gambling license was needed first.

Gaming is a high-stakes proposition in Pennsylvania, which just opened the door to casinos. The Lehigh Valley, with five proposals

For all the feuding over the plant's demise, residents are united in one thing, says Mike Kramer of Save Our Steel, a watchdog group that heightens community awareness: "They really want the Smithsonian museum."

facing off against each other, is competing with the Poconos for the region's lone license. The location is ideal, central to several large population centers. The Mashantucket Peqout, a Connecticut tribe that owns one of the world's largest casinos, has proposed a slots parlor out by the interstate, a threat to the city's downtown.

The BethWorks Now plan aims to gross over $300 million annually, with the city and county each getting a $10 million "host fee" every year under state law. Mayor John Callahan isn't taking sides, but the host fee alone represents 20 percent of the city budget; even in its heyday the Steel never topped 15 percent.

The Sands is a heavyweight. Its $1.5 billion Las Vegas Venetian Resort Casino—replete with canals, gondoliers, fine dining, swank stores, a wedding chapel, and a Guggenheim museum—boasts high-style craftsmanship aimed at re-creating the Venice vibe. A similar fantasy is slated for Macao, with feng-shui consultants on board to ensure that the design—featuring the world's largest chandelier and a seven-story gaming "stadium"—respects the cultural context of China.

BethWorks Now envisions industrial. The blast furnaces would be lit up in a picture window behind the stage of a 5,000-seat indoor arena. A marketplace, incorporating the ruins of the iron foundry, would offer upscale stores and cafes. Some structures would be reused; new ones would have the look of an early 20th-century manufacturing plant. A hotel would anchor the complex, with the casino on the eastern fringe, partly to allay fears of its centrality. The layout would resemble a small-town main street with shops, restaurants, entertainment, office space, and condos or apartments. "When you live here, you'll park your car and you're never leaving," Perrucci said.

Above: "Lots of ghosts," says ex-millworker Jerry Green about what he sees today. "I just think back and recall the many men that were in and out of that gate, hundreds at a time. All those paychecks lost. It's very sad."

The blast furnaces would be lit up in a picture window behind the stage of a 5,000-seat indoor arena. A marketplace, incorporating the ruins of the iron foundry, would offer upscale stores and outdoor cafes . . . A hotel would anchor the complex, with the casino on the eastern fringe, partly to allay fears of its centrality.

Potential residents, says the BethWorks Now proposal, want amenities at their doorstep—largely empty nesters and time-short young professionals who don't share their parents' fears of the city.

SAVE OUR STEEL HOPES THAT BETHLEHEM ISN'T OVERWHELMED BY THE PLAN, BECOMING A diorama for out-of-towners. Especially the South Side, vulnerable to gentrification. Kramer points to Germany's Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord, which turned a blighted landscape into a work of art, embracing its spirit and adjacent immigrant community, without shopping or entertainment. "People from Europe tell me they don't understand why this isn't preserved already. I guess it's the American way of doing things."

The BethWorks Now proposal foresees mixed income housing, with a place for the chic, locally owned shops and restaurants of the arts district, trying to allay fears that chain stores will choke city businesses. The complex would not be walled in, but extend its street grid, and welcome, into the South Side. An arts campus—in which the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor has staked a long-term interest—would have a place, too (the campus is the brainchild of ArtsQuest, a local collaborative that runs the city's very successful festivals).

Amey Senape, co-founder of Save Our Steel, underscores that her group does not advocate, but merely voices what the community wants. SOS brought together residents through a series of forums, broadcasting their desires to the city, the developer, and the media. Attendees were sharply divided on gambling.

Opinions run the gamut among local leaders. "Some officials are in favor of it. I'm not," says State Representative Steve Samuelson, who represents the district. "This is not the right kind of development for our state—or for our community. The numbers that people are using are about $1 billion in revenue. That would require quite a bit of gambling. The citizens of Pennsylvania would have to lose about $3 billion for that $1 billion to materialize." Hanna says that the state is counting on visitors from Ohio, Maryland, West Virginia, New Jersey, and New York.

The developer is currently trying to find space for the museum among the retail stores in No. 2 Machine Shop, though it could wind up in the electrical shop, about a tenth the size, depending on fundraising and other factors. Nothing is cast in stone at this point.

"No promises have been made," Senape says skeptically. "And saving one or two buildings is not enough. We intend to stay vigilant." One hopeful sign, she says, is that BethWorks Now has brought on a preservation architect—Roz Li of Li/Saltzman Architects in New York City.

Time will tell. In the next year and a half, a governor-appointed board will decide who gets a gaming license. Bethlehem has seen the big money before. Are the glory days gone, or almost here?

From an ancient cemetery on the cliff overlooking the site, the furnaces glow in the setting sun. As darkness descends on the valley, the city twinkles to life.

As this issue goes to press, NMIH has retained the fundraising firm of Charles H. Bentz Associates and is replacing the roof of the electrical shop, "the first permanent building," says Donches. "I want to emphasize that BethWorks Now has always supported the museum and has said so publicly." The original museum proposal is at www.nmih.org; contact Steve Donches at nmih@fast.net. The site has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

For more information, contact Laura Burtner, Deputy Director, Office of Economic Development, City of Bethlehem, 10 East Church Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018, email burtnlaul@bethlehem-pa.gov. Save Our Steel is at www.saveoursteel.org, email info@saveoursteel.org.

Left, above: Storage system for personal belongings. Recalls ex-millworker Vince Breugger, "Many people say they were not a people's company. They didn't care about the person. Not true! [There was] lots of opportunity . . . We just had a great mix of immigrants and so forth that blended together beautifully to make Bethlehem a very special city. I think it still is."

ARTI
FACT

SIGNATURE IN STONE

ENIGMATIC PICTURES LEFT BY AN ELUSIVE PEOPLE populate a vast, 99-square-mile area known as the Coso Rock Art District. Its petroglyphs and archeological remains make up one of America's most extensive and undisturbed prehistoric sites. A national historic landmark, it has enjoyed extraordinary protection not only because of its remoteness in the southern California desert, but by virtue of the fact that it is secure on a military site: the China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station. **THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ARCHEOLOGY PROGRAM** has launched a new web feature, "Coso Rock Art," exploring the ancient hunting ground, describing what investigators have learned about the people who lived here for thousands of years. **THE NAVY HAS CONTRACTED MUCH OF THIS WORK,** providing expertise, equipment, and helicopters to give scientists a bird's-eye-view of the basalt and granite-strewn landscape. Highly stylized images of bighorn sheep, mysterious zigzag shapes and geometric patterns, rock cairns, and stone rings have been recorded, fueling theories of desert-dwelling sheep hunters, medicine men, and symbolism. **THOUGH MUCH OF THE LANDMARK** remains unexplored, some 20,000 rock art images have been documented. With graphics that give the online visitor a vivid impression of the landscape, "Coso Rock Art" provides insight into the district's ecosystem and geology as well as its archeological sites. **GO TO WWW.CR.NPS.GOV/AAD/ROCKART.**

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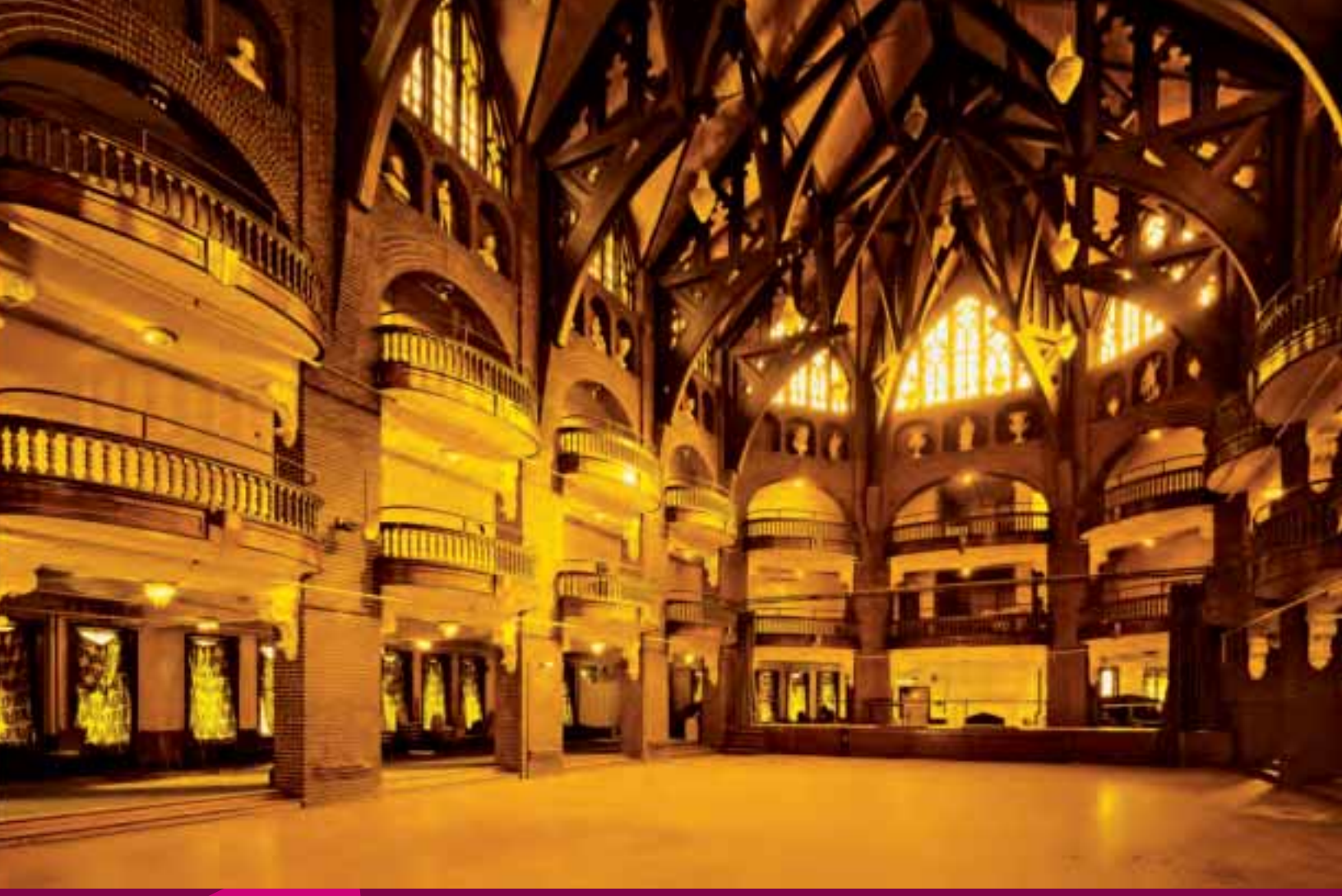

"It has been called an albatross and a gem. It has been flooded, burned, vandalized, torn apart, redone, negotiated over, slated for demolition, and brought back from the brink. Now comes another incarnation."

—from "Long Ago by a Stream in the Woods: The Fall and Rise of Forest Glen," page 20

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